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Monday, 11 March 2002, 11.30 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Kolby	(Norway)
Members:	Bulgaria	Mr. Tafrov
	Cameroon	Mr. Mbayu
	China	Mr. Wang Yingfan
	Colombia	Mr. Valdivieso
	France	Mr. Levitte
	Guinea	Mr. Boubacar Diallo
	Ireland	Mr. Corr
	Mauritius	Mr. Bhuckory
	Mexico	Mr. Aguilar Zinser
	Russian Federation	Mr. Granovsky
	Singapore	Mr. Mahbubani
	Syrian Arab Republic	Mr. Wehbe
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Harrison
	United States of America	Mr. Williamson

Agenda

The situation in Somalia

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Somalia (S/2002/189)

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02-27936 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 11.30 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Somalia

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Somalia (S/2002/189)

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Djibouti, Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Jordan, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Somalia and Spain, in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provision of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Ibrahim (Somalia) took a seat at the Council table; Mr. Olhaye (Djibouti), Mr. Aboul Gheit (Egypt), Mr. Tessema (Ethiopia), Mr. Jalang'o (Kenya), Prince Zeid Ra'ad Zeid Al-Hussein (Jordan), Mr. Dorda (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) and Mr. Arias (Spain) took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President: On behalf of the Council, I extend a warm welcome to Mr. Yusuf Hassan Ibrahim, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Transitional National Government of Somalia.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members have before them document S/2002/189, containing the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Somalia.

Mr. Tafrov (Bulgaria) (*spoke in French*): I welcome Mr. Yusuf Hassan Ibrahim to New York and I thank him for rescheduling his trip for an earlier date in order to be with us today.

Bulgaria fully endorses the statement to be delivered shortly by the Permanent Representative of Spain on behalf of the European Union. I shall therefore confine myself to a few brief comments.

The delegation of Bulgaria would like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting open to all Members of the United Nations. It gives us an opportunity to consider the complex and alarming problems in Somalia.

The Secretary-General's report sheds light on the overall situation in the country, which remains very fragile. Somalia has lacked effective national institutions for more than a decade. It is still divided by the various factions, their mutual recriminations and the violent confrontations among their militias, which continue to occur. The Arta peace and national reconciliation process finds itself at a virtual standstill.

Over the last 10 months, there have been new developments and positive signs from the Somalia peace process. Bulgaria welcomes the decision taken on 14 February by the Committee of Foreign Ministers of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) to convene in Kenya, without the imposition of prior conditions, a national reconciliation conference with the participation of the Transitional National Government and all other Somali parties.

We are convinced that the solution to Somalia's problems lies in the hands of the Somalis themselves. The Arta process can succeed only with the participation of all the factions. It is thus particularly important for the Security Council to give this initiative the necessary support so that all parties will take the path of dialogue and so that the national transition mechanism will be expanded. We hope that the Transitional National Government, the leaders of the political parties, the traditional chiefs and the Somali factions will put aside their differences and act together to advance the peace process.

Bulgaria supports IGAD's efforts for national reconciliation in Somalia. We would particularly like to stress the importance of consensus among the countries of that organization and the need for a unified approach to the peace process in Somalia. The resolution on Somalia adopted at the 9th IGAD Summit is therefore encouraging. It deserves the vigorous support of the international community, particularly that of the United Nations. We are therefore pleased that this meeting of the Security Council is sending to Somali society a

signal of strong support for pursuing the Arta peace process.

Bulgaria encourages discussion of the Secretary-General's proposal to create committees of friends of Somali in Nairobi and in New York. This idea is worth studying with the aim of consolidating the uniformity of the various initiatives for peace in Somalia.

In the context of the events of 11 September, the Council must attentively follow the situation in Somalia to prevent the country from becoming a refuge for members of terrorist organizations. All countries must scrupulously respect the relevant Security Council resolutions. The Transitional National Government and all other parties concerned must demonstrate their readiness to cooperate with the Counter-Terrorism Committee.

Bulgaria is deeply concerned by the spread of small arms in the region. One of the essential tasks of the consolidation process is to put an end to the supply of arms to Somalia.

We particularly want to stress the need for a constructive contribution from neighbouring countries. In that regard, the international community must consider means to enhance the effectiveness of the sanctions. As Chairman of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 751 (1992) concerning Somalia, Bulgaria sees the need to ensure full compliance with those sanctions.

We are greatly alarmed by the grave humanitarian situation in Somalia. We encourage donors to respond generously to the Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal, and we congratulate the competent United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations that are working in difficult circumstances to alleviate the suffering of the Somali people. At the same time, we urge the Somali parties to make an active contribution to the work of United Nations personnel by guaranteeing the safety of humanitarian workers and the necessary access to strategic sites.

Bulgaria agrees with the report's conclusions on security issues and stresses that the safety of personnel, especially peacekeeping personnel, is a prerequisite for effective work on the ground by the United Nations.

Mr. Mahbubani (Singapore): I, too, would like to join you, Sir, in warmly welcoming Mr. Yusuf Hassan Ibrahim, the Foreign Minister of Somalia, and to thank him for the rather comprehensive statement that he gave us in the private meeting earlier, which I found to be very helpful.

I also want to congratulate you for putting this very difficult file on the agenda of the month. You may recall that, in the final wrap-up meeting of last year, we discussed the successful files, not-so-successful files and moderately successful files. Clearly, Somalia is one of the most difficult files that the Council is faced with and, to be very candid, we do not think that we have the answers to the problems faced on this issue. We hope that, in the course of this discussion, the Council will try to find some answers.

You have asked us to be brief, so what I propose to do is to make just four points.

The first point, of course, is the obvious one, which is that the problems of Somalia can be solved only by the people of Somalia. Indeed, the Foreign Minister very approvingly quoted the Secretary-General's statement in his report of 21 February, in which he says:

> "Only Somalia's leaders can decide to end the suffering of their people and only they can decide to negotiate an end to the conflict. They need to rise above their differences and put the interests of the people of Somalia first and foremost." (*S/2002/189, para. 65*)

I think we are all agreed on that. At the same time, I think it is very helpful that Somalia has neighbours that are trying to play a helpful role. Many have commended Djibouti for the Arta process and we are now, hopefully, going to see some progress in the process initiated by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development. As long as the neighbours work on the principle of respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity, political independence and unity of Somalia, I hope that they will make a contribution to the solution of the problem of Somalia.

The second point I wish to make is, of course, about the role of the international community. Here, it may be recalled that last week, speaking in the informal consultations, I asked the question of whether or not we in the international community have decided what exactly is our role on the Somali question. Are we like the medical doctor, analysing and at the same time providing prescriptions and medicine? Are we just a pure political scientist, analysing the situation without providing any assistance? Or are we, perhaps, just a

bystander, watching what is going on without getting involved? I am not sure what the answer is to that question, but at some point it might be helpful for the international community to work out where, exactly, it stands on the Somali question.

The third point I wish to make is that, in terms of analysing or understanding what we can do, perhaps one point we may want to bear in mind is that, post-11 September, it is actually in the interest of the international community to encourage all States — and I would emphasize this point: all States — to have strong national Governments. Strong national Governments are an essential requirement in the fight against international terrorism. We hope that, wherever there is an exception, the international community will try to find the answer to it. In that sense, I think that the international community has a vested interest in trying to re-establish a strong national Government in Somalia.

My fourth and final point is, of course, that I hope, in trying to look at the Somalia question, we will not look just at various aspects of it. There is a huge humanitarian problem that, I think, has been touched upon. We also need to work out a comprehensive policy on Somalia over the long term that I hope will provide a solution to the problem. At the same time, having heard what both the Foreign Minister and the Permanent Representative of Somalia said this morning on the question of the Al-Barakaat accounts, I think it is clear that the freezing of the accounts has aggravated the humanitarian difficulties of the Somali people. I hope that we will find some way or another to unfreeze the accounts to ensure that those who, in a sense, are the honest recipients of the funds will get their funds back as quickly as possible.

Mr. Wehbe (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): We would like to thank you, Sir, for convening this important meeting to consider the situation in brotherly Somalia.

We join in the welcome extended by preceding speakers to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Somalia, Mr. Yusuf Hassan Ibrahim. We support the statement to be made by the Permanent Representative of Jordan in his capacity as Chairman of the Arab Group this month. That statement will demonstrate the support of Arab Governments for the Transitional National Government of Somalia, as stressed by the Arab Foreign Ministers meeting two days ago in Cairo.

The ongoing situation in Somalia has certainly not enjoyed any intervention by the Security Council, which would impose a major security, political, economic and humanitarian responsibility on us. We must discharge our mission as members of the Security Council, which is to ensure the maintenance of international peace and security.

During our debate on the Secretary-General's report on the situation in Somalia, we can assert that the report covers the various economic, political and security dimensions of the crisis there. The picture painted in the report is indeed a bleak one. From a security perspective, Somalia remains one of the most dangerous areas in which the United Nations is involved and active. Yet, the report does not recommend the sending of a mission to Somalia.

With respect to peace-building in Somalia, we support the Secretary-General's assertion of the importance of ensuring the security of United Nations personnel. At the same time, we must find some explanation of why the situation in Somalia has deteriorated so that we may remedy it. We feel that the report does not stress this aspect, but such an approach would help us to find a way to break the vicious cycle in that country.

We could use the successful lessons learned by United Nations missions in other African countries where civil wars and conflicts had been waged. However, in extremely dangerous security situations, the United Nations has in some cases been able to send peace-building missions that have made positive contributions to ending warfare and building peace in those countries.

A question therefore arises: Why not do the same in Somalia? Why do we not send a peace mission there? The Secretary-General's recommendations in his report are not, we feel, really adequate for addressing the situation in Somalia. There is an imperative need to formulate specific recommendations that would enable our Organization to provide greater assistance, including in the demobilization of militia members and the training of police personnel, as proposed by the Security Council in its presidential statement of 31 October 2001. This is vitally important if we are to improve the security situation in Somalia. It would also enable the Transitional National Government to make use of the humanitarian resources available to it in the army and police.

There is also an imperative need for a comprehensive approach to dealing with the situation in Somalia, one that will support peace-building and security, which are keys to development in the country. Sending a United Nations mission must not be held hostage to the wishes of a few warlords who are taking advantage of the current situation and imposing such great suffering on the people of Somalia. I assume that this is now what we in the Security Council wish to see happen.

The Arta peace process, about which the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Somalia spoke during our private meeting this morning, is a historic opportunity for the Transitional National Government. The international community has agreed that the process provided the best chance to establish lasting peace in Somalia. However, the Government inherited a war-torn country that truly needs material resources in order to rebuild its infrastructure.

One key to success for the Transitional National Government is to acquire adequate material resources to address this situation. In that context, we would emphasize the following points, which we would like to see reflected in the presidential statement to be adopted at the end of our meeting or shortly thereafter.

First, the Council would support the Transitional National Government's efforts to complete the process of national reconciliation, and would strongly condemn the warlords, who continue to hamper all peace efforts and are an obstacle on the road to national reconciliation — a road that would lead Somalia from the phase of conflict to that of peace-building.

Secondly, the Council would reaffirm the principles of the unity, independence and territorial integrity of Somalia and of non-intervention in its internal affairs, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations. This point was not mentioned in the latest report of the Secretary-General.

Thirdly, the Council would consider setting up a monitoring and verification mechanism that would facilitate the work of the sanctions Committee established pursuant to resolution 751 (1992), would ensure strict compliance with the arms embargo imposed under Chapter VII of the Charter, and would study any violations of the embargo. Ambassador Tafrov, Chairman of the sanctions Committee, and the other Committee members have stressed that the Committee must work effectively, and we welcome that sentiment.

Fourthly, a Committee of Friends of Somalia is envisaged in the report, and we welcome that idea. We believe that setting up such a Committee should take into account the need to include international and regional organizations and States involved in the Somalia conflict, so that its work can be positive and constructive and can lead to national reconciliation. Conflicts among regional, national and international initiatives would thus be avoided.

Finally, the international community in general and the Security Council in particular must participate in a serious process to build peace in Somalia and to put an end to the conflict in that country, where chaos and war have prevailed for so many years. That is the only way to lift Somalia out of the vicious circle resulting from the country's lack of security and the fact that it has been largely ignored for the last decade. Such a process would send the right message to the Somali people, to subregional and regional organizations and also to donors. It would help strengthen the ongoing process of national reconciliation and thereby help support the efforts of the Transitional National Government. The League of Arab States also supports those efforts.

We look forward to the national reconciliation conference to be held at Nairobi in late April. We hope that it will be a qualitative turning point that will lead Somalia and the Transitional National Government, with the cooperation of neighbouring States, back to peace. Cooperation between Somalia and its neighbours would then ensure peace in Somalia and in neighbouring countries, while respecting the unity and territorial integrity of the country and its people.

This morning, we heard a bitter complaint from Somalia over the crisis concerning the Al-Barakaat bank. I think we must try to find a solution to that problem, because that is the only bank in Somalia — the lungs of the economy, so to speak — that could improve the financial situation in the country. Thus we must find a solution, especially in the light of the statement by the Somali Minister for Foreign Affairs that the brotherly Somali people are a peace-loving people. I think the question of a solution should be studied carefully and wisely, to ensure life, well-being and development for the Somali people. We must provide assistance, particularly taking into account the

natural disaster of the drought in Somalia and neighbouring countries.

Mr. Valdivieso (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I too should like to extend a warm welcome to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Somalia, Mr. Yusuf Hassan Ibrahim, and to thank him for the information he provided in our previous private meeting. We should also like to acknowledge your initiative, Mr. President, to convene this open meeting of the Council.

I shall limit my statement to three elements in the report of the Secretary-General, the first of which is the role to be played by the international community.

The participation of the international community in the reconciliation process in Somalia has been very important thus far. Indeed, the leadership shown by the Government of Djibouti in the Arta process was fundamental to the establishment of the Transitional National Government.

Moreover, at this moment the initiative of the heads of State of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), under the leadership of President Moi of Kenya, to hold a national reconciliation conference in mid-April, deserves our full support.

The participation of regional leaders in that Conference attests to the importance to the region of achieving a more broad-based reconciliation process, in order to guarantee greater stability in Somalia. We therefore support that initiative and hope that it will bear positive fruit.

The regional authorities already have an established role in the reconciliation process. We believe that the same should be true for the United Nations and the Security Council. The report of the Secretary-General notes that, for security reasons, it is impossible to re-establish a political office in Somalia. We take note of that consideration, but we believe that we must seek different alternatives that would give the United Nations a greater political presence on the ground, which may eventually help improve security conditions.

One option we could consider is to strengthen the role of the Security Council. Here I have in mind more regular briefings to the Council as to the situation on the ground. The Council could also create monitoring mechanisms to monitor arms embargo violations. Another initiative might be to promote an information network, through United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations that are carrying out humanitarian programmes, in order to provide more and better information and thus to get a better and more accurate picture of what is happening on the ground.

The second element involves the arms embargo. We deem alarming the information we have received as to the number of small arms that are continuing to circulate throughout the country. That traffic is proof of the continued violations of the arms embargo imposed by the Security Council through resolution 733 (1992). It is also clearly necessary to create a monitoring mechanism for these sanctions, since violations continue to occur because of the lack of detailed follow-up.

The presidential statement on small arms issued by the Council on 31 August last, under Colombia's presidency, notes the need to enhance the effectiveness of arms embargoes through the establishment of specific monitoring mechanisms. It also makes the point that cooperation must be promoted among non-governmental organizations and regional organizations in order to achieve a better application of arms embargoes.

It is our view that the Somalia sanctions Committee, chaired by the Ambassador of Bulgaria, must spearhead this process in order to ensure compliance by all States with the provisions set out by the Council. I should like to assure Ambassador Tafrov of the full cooperation of my delegation in this respect.

In that same presidential statement, the Secretary-General is asked to include in his reports analytical assessments on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. The sad reality is that conflicts are fuelled by trafficking in small arms, the interference of neighbouring States and the indifference of arms-exporting countries as to the destination of their products. That is why we stress that the next report of the Secretary-General should address in greater depth this issue as it affects Somalia.

The third element involves the fight against terrorism. The combat against terrorism is being waged at the international level and demands the commitment of all States. The Transitional National Government has informed us that it has adopted a series of measures to implement resolution 1373 (2001). It has asked the international community for assistance so that it can create the infrastructure necessary for ensuring full

compliance with that resolution. Our view is that this appeal must be heeded in order to avoid having Somalia, for lack of cooperation, be used as a refuge for terrorists.

The effects of the fight against terrorism have already made themselves felt in Somalia. The closing of the Al-Barakaat Group of Companies has caused a drop in family income, which has made the implementation of certain programmes more difficult. It would be desirable to establish transparent funds-transfer systems, so that the Somalis could benefit from lawful systems that have no connection with networks that finance terrorism. In this context, we support the initiatives that the United Nations Development Programme intends to carry out in that country.

In conclusion, I should like to reiterate the commitment of the international community and of the Council in particular to work towards national reconciliation in Somalia and to prevent anarchy, which has held that country in its grip for so many years, from triumphing once again.

Mr. Wang Yingfan (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): At the outset, I wish to welcome the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Somali Transitional National Government, Mr. Yusuf Hassan Ibrahim, to today's meeting. I should like also to congratulate the newly appointed Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Tubman, head of the United Nations Political Office for Somalia.

In accordance with the decision taken by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) Summit and the IGAD Foreign Ministers Committee on Somalia, the Somali National Reconciliation Conference will be held in April in Nairobi. Preparations for the Conference are to be handled jointly by the three neighbouring countries and by the IGAD secretariat.

We welcome and support the encouraging developments that have taken place in the Somali peace process. Allow me to point out that the responsibility for national reconciliation and durable peace in Somalia lies, in the final analysis, in the hands of the Somali parties themselves. Without the participation and support of all parties in Somalia, even the best peace initiative will remain on paper — an exercise in armchair strategizing.

We endorse the Secretary-General's view that only Somalia's leaders can decide to end the suffering of their people and that only they can decide to negotiate an end to the conflict. Therefore we urge the Somali parties, in the supreme interest of national reconciliation, to demonstrate the necessary goodwill, attend the April Nairobi Conference without any preconditions and endeavour to resolve, through dialogue and negotiations, problems that are not amenable to settlement by force.

As pointed out in the report of the Secretary-General's, the Somali peace process will require not only political will on the part of the Somali political leaders and the sustained encouragement and support of Somalia's immediate neighbours and of the wider international community, but also greater unity of purpose and coordination of the initiatives of the international community. This is the only way to contribute to the establishment of a broad-based and all-inclusive Government, on the basis of the maintenance of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Somalia.

We appreciate the tremendous amount of humanitarian relief work done by the United Nations system and other organizations in very harsh conditions on the ground. We call on the Somali factions to ensure the freedom of movement and safety and security of humanitarian personnel and provide them with the necessary facilities.

Effective implementation of the arms embargo on Somalia can play a positive catalytic role in the peace process. We hope that the long-standing situation of ineffective implementation of the sanctions will soon be reversed. We will continue to support the work of the sanctions Committee, and we hope that countries and regional organizations concerned will actively cooperate with it.

Mr. Levitte (France) (*spoke in French*): I, too, would like to warmly welcome to this Chamber the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Somalia, Mr. Yusuf Hassan Ibrahim. I would also like to thank him for the information that he gave us during the closed meeting. Rest assured, Mr. Minister, that it is very useful to us.

The Transitional National Government, which emerged from the Arta process, deserves support. As the Secretary-General has said, it is the only viable option. It is also the best guarantee of the unity and territorial integrity of Somalia — a unity and territorial

integrity to which the Council constantly reaffirms its commitment. The new Government of Prime Minister Farah should be given every chance. We should respond to this Government's offers to cooperate in the struggle against terrorism.

A statement will be made later in the meeting by the Permanent Representative of Spain on behalf of the European Union. France fully endorses it. I will therefore limit my statement to a few brief comments.

The Security Council was first seized of the situation in Somalia in early 1992, 10 years ago. It has devoted much energy to the Somali crisis and has adopted close to 20 resolutions on the matter. These resolutions have allowed for the deployment of two peacekeeping operations, at the cost of some $2 billion, and of a multinational force of 37,000 persons.

This is no time to give up. France shares the cautious optimism of the Secretary-General. The 9th Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) Summit opened up new prospects. The National Reconciliation Conference, scheduled for the second half of April in Nairobi, should confirm them, provided, however, that the Transitional National Government and all of the Somali parties participate in it without preconditions and provided also that all States of the region confirm their good will. This is one of the messages that the Council should pass on.

In the new post-11 September context, it is essential to help Somalia in order to prevent it from becoming a new Afghanistan. It should be done in cooperation with the Somalis. It should be done by limiting negative humanitarian consequences. We can only emphasize from this point of view the very grave consequences of the freeze on the assets of Al-Barakaat. The formula of a controlled lifting of the freeze of the frozen assets, proposed by the Somali authorities, should be welcomed.

What can the Council do? Several excellent courses of action have been put forward in the Secretary-General's report. The good-offices missions of Mohamed Sahnoun have certainly had a very beneficial impact, particularly on the Khartoum summit. It is necessary to pursue and intensify them. They will usefully complement the daily activities of the Secretary-General's new Representative, Mr. Winston Tubman.

The creation of two groups of friends, in Nairobi and New York, is also a step in the right direction. France would be interested in participating, alongside other countries that could help with the settlement and to contribute to the mobilization of the international community.

What else can be done? It is important, first of all, that the Council clearly reaffirms its commitment to certain principles. France unreservedly supports the preparation of a presidential statement that could be adopted this week.

Further, the means of making effective the arms embargo imposed in 1992 are being discussed by the sanctions Committee under its new Chairman, the Ambassador of Bulgaria. I will not go into the details, but the stakes are high for a country that is marked by arms proliferation. Significant disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes will also be indispensable.

Finally, the Council should stand ready to take decisive steps. France is in favour of sending a peace-building mission to Somalia as soon as the security conditions allow for one. Unfortunately, the outcome of the inter-agency mission that went to several Somali regions between 15 and 23 January has not yet led to this. But it is necessary that security in Mogadishu, in particular, continue to be regularly assessed in the hope that a green light can soon be given to the return of the United Nations, particularly to the capital.

Mr. Bhuckory (Mauritius): Let me first thank you, Sir, for organizing this public meeting to discuss the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Somalia. I take this opportunity to welcome Mr. Yusuf Hassan Ibrahim, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, in our midst and to thank him for his comprehensive statement made earlier today.

Since our discussion of the situation in Somalia in this Chamber last October there have been a number of important developments in respect to Somalia — first and foremost, the appointment of a new Prime Minister, Mr. Hassan Abshir Farah, to whom we would like to convey our best wishes for success. There has also been a change at the level of the Representative of the Secretary-General, with Mr. Winston Tubman replacing Mr. David Stephen. I take this opportunity to pay tribute to Mr. Stephen for the very important work he has done over the past four years in supporting the national reconciliation process in Somalia. We know

that his task was not an easy one. We welcome Mr. Tubman in his new function as the new Representative of the Secretary-General and express to him our full support in his new assignment.

Mauritius has said time and again that the Arta process remains the only viable framework that could bring hope to the Somali people and eventually peace and stability in Somalia. That is why it is so important to remain focused in our efforts to pursue the Arta process to its completion.

Last October, when we considered the situation in Somalia, the Mauritius delegation mentioned that the two major challenges facing the country and the Transitional National Government were national reconciliation on the political front and safeguarding the sovereignty, territorial integrity and unity of Somalia. We welcome in this regard the statement of the Transitional National Government with regard to making the reconciliation process a top priority through talks with the factional leaders and regional administrations. Since last November, there have been a number of important regional initiatives to move the reconciliation process forward. We need to encourage these initiatives as much as we can.

One important initiative was the reconciliation meeting convened last December by President Moi of Kenya, during which a number of agreements were signed between the Transitional National Government and the faction leaders who were present at the meeting. Those efforts culminated in the decision of the Transitional National Government to form an all-inclusive and broader-based Government. This is a clear demonstration of the seriousness of the intent of the Transitional National Government to reach out to the faction leaders who have so far remained outside the Arta process. This also shows that there is hope for a reconciliation process in Somalia — especially when the countries of the region are determined to help in reconciliation efforts.

We support the proposal of the Secretary-General to re-establish the Committee of Friends on Somalia. We believe that such a group could be extremely useful in furthering the objectives of the Arta conference — objectives which the Security Council has reiterated time and again. It is therefore imperative that members of this group, to be established in both Nairobi and New York, share this vision of the Council. They should be genuinely committed to helping the Transitional National Government advance the national reconciliation process. Mauritius is ready to be part of that group.

We also welcome the regional political initiative recently undertaken by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) to help the political process in Somalia. IGAD is, indeed, playing a vital role in advancing national reconciliation in Somalia. That was well demonstrated at the 9th IGAD Summit, which gave due attention to that issue. My delegation welcomes the Summit's decision to convene the Somalia reconciliation conference in Nairobi next month. At this juncture, it is important for the international community and the Security Council to send a strong message of support and to assist, by all means, the convening of the conference.

The report of the Secretary-General paints a bleak picture of the humanitarian situation in Somalia. The food security situation in Gedo is precarious. The international community should therefore step up its efforts to prevent a humanitarian tragedy from unfolding in Somalia. We call upon the donor countries to contribute to the United Nations Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal for Somalia.

With regard to the security situation in Somalia, we have taken note of the findings of the inter-agency security assessment mission. The report states that Somalia remains one of the most dangerous environments in which the United Nations operates, and that is preventing the Secretary-General from launching the much-awaited long-term peace-building programme in Somalia. It is clear that the insecure environment is the result of the action of the warlords and their refusal to cooperate with the Transitional National Government. It is unacceptable that the United Nations continues to remain hostage to these warlords, who are committed only to spreading violence and undermining all efforts at reconciliation.

The intransigence of the warlords is exacerbated by the proliferation and easy availability of small arms and light weapons within Somalia. It is therefore important that those who are engaged in arming the various militia groups in Somalia be identified, and that action be taken against them. The arms embargo imposed on Somalia under Security Council resolution 733 (1992) is obviously being violated. It is unacceptable that, when the Security Council is striving to bring peace and stability to Somalia, there

are still some unscrupulous elements that are doing just the opposite by arming the warlords.

We are grateful to Ambassador Tafrov of Bulgaria for reactivating the work of the Somalia sanctions Committee. We believe that there is an urgent need to reinforce the arms embargo on that country.

As we discuss the situation in Somalia again today in the Council, we should ask ourselves what more the United Nations can do to assist that country, which has suffered from more than a decade of anarchy and chaos. We now have a process that appears to be on track, and we have a Transitional National Government that is showing that it is committed to bringing peace and order back to the country. In his statement to the Council last October, former Prime Minister Galaydh stated,

> "in all of our discussions with donors and with the United Nations we have always said that the best way to help us is to help establish the police and security forces". (*S/PV.4392 (Resumption 1), p. 18*)

That is precisely what the United Nations should do to help the Transitional National Government maintain security in Mogadishu and elsewhere. We urge the various United Nations development agencies to increase their efforts to train and equip the security forces of the Transitional National Government. The so-called police forces in Mogadishu are living in camps and are not earning any salary. Assisting them would send a strong message to the people of Somalia that the international community cares about their plight and to the warlords that it would be in their interests to put down their weapons and join the peace process.

Finally, we also fully support projects currently considered by the United Nations Development Programme for the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) of the militias. We hope that the next report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Somalia will indicate the number of police personnel who have so far been trained and the number of militias considered under the DDR programme.

Mr. Mbayu (Cameroon) (*spoke in French*): I should like to thank you, Mr. President, for taking the initiative to organize a public debate in the Security Council on the situation in Somalia. Like earlier speakers, I would like to welcome His Excellency Mr. Yusuf Hassan Ibrahim, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Transitional National Government of Somalia. We would also like to thank him for the detailed information he gave us at the private meeting this morning on the situation in his country and the efforts being made by the Government to foster peace and national reconciliation in Somalia.

The situation in Somalia has been a major cause of concern to the international community for many years. It is a country that has been divided, torn apart, devastated and ravaged by war. Given that background, we warmly welcome the most recent report of the Secretary-General; the information that it contains is cause for renewed hope. We must take advantage of these positive signals.

Cameroon believes that by the end of this debate the Council will have stressed the importance of five points. The first is the need to maintain and strengthen national dialogue among all the Somali factions. The second is the need to step up the process of national reconciliation so as to foster a fully representative, broad-based Government, while at the same time preserving the sovereignty, territorial integrity and unity of Somalia. Thirdly, specific steps must be taken for social and economic recovery and the restoration of peace, security and stability in that country. That will require increased mobilization of financial resources so as to attain the $83.7 million requested in the most recent Inter-Agency Consolidated Appeal to meet humanitarian needs. There will also have to be material and financial support for the very promising activities in the field by the World Health Organization and Doctors Without Borders. Fourthly, additional assistance will be required for the United Nations consolidated inter-agency disarmament, demobilization and reintegration plan. Fifthly, activities aimed at economic recovery for the consolidation of peace need to be strengthened, with particular emphasis on combating illiteracy, ensuring respect for the rule of law, demining, demobilizing militia groups and reintegrating former militia members, and ensuring respect for human rights.

In order for the recovery and reconstruction process in Somalia to succeed, our Somali brothers must demonstrate a spirit of tolerance, patriotism and dialogue, and accept negotiations with a view to national reconciliation. To that end, my country supports the initiative by the member countries of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development to bring

all factions together at a national reconciliation conference during the second half of April 2002. It is our hope that all factions will participate effectively at the conference.

Cameroon also supports the initiative of the Secretary-General to set up a Committee of Friends on Somalia, at both Nairobi and New York. The membership of the two groups must nevertheless take into account the complexity of the matter and the stated sensitivities of those in the subregion.

Lastly, I would like to congratulate Mr. Tubman, the new Representative of the Secretary-General. I wish him good luck in his new and noble task of bringing about peace and heartfelt reconciliation in Somalia.

Mr. Corr (Ireland): I would like, first, to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this public meeting on Somalia today.

My delegation joins others in warmly welcoming Minister Yusuf Hassan Ibrahim, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Somalia, with whom the Council had a very constructive meeting in private session earlier this morning.

Placing Council attention on the situation in Somalia has been a priority for Ireland since coming into the Security Council. We are therefore very pleased to see the Council and the wider United Nations membership focus on the issue today in this open meeting.

The Permanent Representative of Spain will speak shortly on behalf of the European Union, and Ireland of course fully associates itself with his statement.

I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his report, which we have before us today. I want to pay warm tribute to the former Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. David Stephen, for his commitment to the people of Somalia and his untiring efforts in what must be one of the most challenging posts in the United Nations system. I would also like to wish Mr. Winston Tubman, the new Representative of the Secretary-General, every success as he takes on the mantle.

We heard in October from the former Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Stephen, that the people of Somalia were ready for peace. We see today in the report of the Secretary-General that the heads of State of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) have concluded that Somalis are tired of conflict and division. It has always been the case that the momentum for peace must come from the Somali people themselves. It is now clear that the people of Somalia have begun what will not be an easy process to move towards peaceful reconciliation. It is equally clear that the wider international community must support their efforts, building on the first, tentative steps taken at Arta. My delegation welcomes, for that reason, the proposal by the Secretary-General to establish the Committee of Friends on Somalia in New York and in Nairobi.

We are particularly encouraged that there is now agreement on a unified regional approach, which offers strong beginnings of new hope for Somalia. Ireland strongly supports the IGAD initiatives agreed at the level of heads of State and Government and foreign ministers since the beginning of the year. While it is true that only Somalia's leaders can end the suffering of their people, it is also fair to say that it will not be possible without a coordinated, constructive approach on the part of its neighbours. We encourage all States, in particular those in the region, to continue to contribute in this positive spirit to national reconciliation in Somalia. The gain will be not only for the people of Somalia but for wider regional stability and development.

The National Reconciliation Conference on Somalia, to be held in Nairobi in a few weeks' time, will be an historic opportunity for the Somali parties — all Somali parties — to begin at last to put the interests of the Somali people — innocent victims of years of mindless power feuding and divisions — ahead of all power struggles and partisan motives. We strongly encourage all Somali parties to participate in the conference, and to participate without preconditions, in a spirit of compromise and cooperation, so as to complete the process begun at Arta.

At the same time, we encourage all parties to continue to focus on achieving reconciliation at the local level as well. My delegation especially welcomes the commitment of the Secretary-General and his Special Adviser Mohamed Sahnoun to assist IGAD countries in implementing the decision taken at the 9th IGAD Summit. Ireland will strongly support an active United Nations role in this area.

As the report of the Secretary-General clearly illustrates, various United Nations agencies, including the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), are actively engaged in promoting peace and reconciliation through various programmes in Somalia, which, as the Secretary-General says, contribute to overall United Nations peace-building objectives. We are encouraged by the briefing that the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) gave in Geneva in February when introducing the Consolidated Appeal, reporting that there are approximately 150 United Nations staff working on the ground in Somalia on any given day.

The results of the recent inter-agency security assessment mission in Somalia are clear, and we of course accept that, for the moment, the United Nations should not repatriate United Nations Political Office for Somalia. We also hope, and we are confident, that this question will be kept under review. In the meantime, we must see what the international community can do within these constraints to assist the people of Somalia, who for over a decade now have struggled, to a large extent isolated from the support available to the populations of other countries struggling with crisis.

The international community has a clear and unambiguous responsibility to the people of Somalia, which obliges us to look beyond the limitations that the current security situation imposes and to reflect and come up with ideas as to what is possible within the constraints to help create the circumstances in which the United Nations can become more fully engaged in Somalia. We in the Council, in short, also have that responsibility. Silence and lack of action is not an option.

We have the presidential statement that we adopted in October, which calls for proposals on how the United Nations may further assist in the demobilization of militia members and the training of police personnel from the Transitional National Government. We believe it would be appropriate to look at such proposals and at any other means by which we could help create more favourable circumstances on the ground.

We should also now consider how to give greater effect to the arms embargo on Somalia. The reports of preparations for a major offensive, as contained in paragraph 33 of the Secretary-General's report, are extremely worrying, as such reported developments would clearly be in breach of Security Council resolution 733 (1992). In the presidential statement of October last year, the Council insisted

> "that all States, in particular those of the region, should not interfere in the internal affairs of Somalia. Such interference could jeopardize the sovereignty, territorial integrity, political independence and unity of Somalia." (*S/PRST/2001/30, p. 2*)

The Council furthermore insisted that "the territory of Somalia should not be used to undermine stability in the subregion" (*ibid.*). We believe that if these principles were respected, the security situation in Somalia would be enhanced.

We strongly support strengthening enforcement of the sanctions regime. One option might be the establishment of an appropriate mechanism to do so, as it is clear that the regime that has been in place now for 10 years has not been enforced.

Ireland welcomes the establishment of an anti-terrorism task force by the Transitional National Government, and we urge that it be seen to be effective and urgent in its work.

The report of the Secretary-General points to a perilous humanitarian situation in the country. The United Nations humanitarian and development agencies continue to carry out important, life-saving work in the face of often serious obstacles. Such obstacles include a certain ennui on the part of the international donor community, and we strongly urge donors to respond generously to the Inter-Agency Appeal.

My delegation notes the comments of the Minister this morning on the impact of the freezing of the Al-Barakaat accounts. We are also hopeful that a satisfactory solution will be found quickly, which would help ease unnecessary suffering.

There is no such thing as a failed society. There may be failed State institutions, there may be weakness of governance, but society and the needs of people transcend more narrow, legalistic definitions. The people of Somalia need the help of the international community. The IGAD partners need our support. The peoples of the region need our engagement. We on the Council have a duty to offer this support.

Mr. Diallo (Guinea) (*spoke in French*): My delegation first wishes to thank you, Sir, for taking the initiative of convening this open meeting on Somalia, which comes just a few days after the meeting on the Ethiopian-Eritrean conflict. That initiative was a most eloquent demonstration of the interest that the Council, through your presidency, attaches to the peaceful resolution of conflicts in Africa. My delegation also wishes to express its appreciation to the Secretary-General for the wealth of detail and highly useful contents of his latest report on the situation in Somalia.

We welcome the appointment of Mr. Winston Tubman as the Secretary-General's Representative for Somalia, and we assure him of our cooperation. We would also like to welcome the presence of Mr. Yusuf Hassan Ibrahim, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Somalia, and to thank him for his informative report during our closed meeting.

The grave crisis affecting Somalia for over a decade remains a matter of great concern. The way has been prepared for national reconciliation. The Arta peace process of 2000, which fostered reconciliation among part of the Somali society and gave rise to the establishment of transitional institutions, gives reason for hope in this regard. My delegation believes that the process, recognized by the international community as the only viable foundation for a lasting and global solution to the crisis, must be fully carried out.

In this regard, we consider it urgent and imperative that all parties to the conflict, political groups and factions be part of the current process. That is one of the sine qua non conditions for a lasting restoration of peace. National reconciliation and the restoration of confidence cannot be achieved without the effective participation of all socio-political sensibilities in the country.

One welcomes the decision of the 9th Summit of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) to hold a reconciliation conference to include the participation of all Somali political actors, in Nairobi in April. It is to be hoped that all those who have influence over the various actors use it to ensure their effective participation.

There is no doubt that the results achieved are derisory compared to the suffering endured by the Somali population since 1991. Indeed, numerous challenges are yet to be addressed, among them the humanitarian and security problems. That is why it is essential to reinforce the arms embargo in order put an end to their proliferation. A demobilization, disarmament and reintegration programme must be implemented as well.

With regard to humanitarian concerns, my delegation is concerned at the grave situation of food shortages and appeals to the international community to mobilize resources to alleviate the suffering of the population.

It is understood that it is first and foremost up to the Somalis themselves to demonstrate their wisdom by finally putting an end to the fratricidal conflict, which has gone on too long. However, it is also true that the international community can provide the impetus and continue the efforts made in this country since 1992. For this reason, my delegation continues to believe that the United Nations has a role in the recovery of Somalia, taking into account, needless to say, the security of its personnel. My delegation believes that in the current international context, the implementation of a peace-building mission in Somalia is indispensable.

Finally, my delegation is favourable to the idea of creating a committee of friends of the Secretary-General for Somalia.

Mr. Williamson (United States of America): We would like to welcome our Somali friends, Foreign Minister Yusuf Hassan Ibrahim and other members of the Transitional National Government, back to the Security Council. We thank them for their statements to the Council this morning. We note their efforts to comply with the provisions of Council resolution 1373 (2001) and appreciate their contributions to date in the war against terrorism.

The United States remains committed to working with all Somalis dedicated to the tasks of combating terrorism, ensuring a secure environment for the delivery of humanitarian assistance, promoting economic development and overcoming long-term governance challenges.

We thank the Secretary-General for the recent report on Somalia and share his concern over the lack of progress on political reconciliation. We, too, remain concerned over continued violence throughout Somalia. In particular, we condemn those responsible for the recent death of a worker for the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the kidnapping of the UNICEF programme director based in Mogadishu.

Those incidents point out once again the very dangers that United Nations personnel face each day in Somalia.

We commend the United Nations for its continued efforts to assist civilians in need through the provision of humanitarian assistance and promoting economic development where feasible. We share the Security Council's concern over the worsening humanitarian situation, which is compounded by the level of violence, which threatens to reduce humanitarian assistance operations.

The United States supports the Secretary-General's recommendation for the establishment of a friends of Somalia group constituted both in Nairobi and here in New York. We would also like to express our appreciation to Mr. David Stephan, the former Representative of the Secretary-General for Somalia, for his dedicated and tireless work. We welcome Mr. Winston Tubman, the Secretary-General's new Representative for Somalia, and pledge to work with him as we move forward.

We fully concur with the assessment of the security situation in Somalia, based upon the recommendations of the United Nations headquarters inter-agency mission and their recommendation not to re-establish the peace-building office in Mogadishu at this time.

As members recall, the inter-agency composition of the United Nations mission was intended to ensure that those United Nations departments responsible for conducting operations in Somalia would have an opportunity to evaluate the security situation on the ground from the perspective of their humanitarian and political operational requirements. Those officials contributed to the final assessment contained in the report. We believe that those United Nations departments, in conjunction with United Nations security officials, are best suited to make a judgement concerning the United Nations presence in Somalia.

We remain committed to removing the terrorist threat in Somalia and ensuring against the use of Somalia as a terrorist base. To that end, we call upon all parties in Somalia to observe the provisions of Council resolution 1373 (2001).

We also seek to prevent developments in Somalia from threatening regional peace and stability. Security Council resolution 733 (1992), which calls for a general and complete embargo on all deliveries of weapons and military equipment to Somalia, remains in force and is relevant to the fight against terrorism as well as to the quest for peace and reconciliation. All States have a continued obligation to implement resolution 733 (1992) fully and completely. We appreciate the leadership demonstrated by Bulgaria in convening the Committee established pursuant to resolution 733 (1992) and stand ready to assist the Committee in developing strategies that will result in an effective arms embargo for Somalia.

We support Somali and regional efforts intended to promote national reconciliation and to overcome the long-term governance challenges that terrorists have exploited to make Somalia a base. Specifically, we call upon all Somali parties to attend the April national reconciliation conference in Kenya — sponsored by President Moi, endorsed by both Ethiopia and Djibouti and carried out under the auspices of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development — without reservation or preconditions. We also call upon neighbouring States to play a constructive role in efforts aimed at Somali political reconciliation and request that they encourage all Somali parties to attend the conference and approach it with the goal of fostering political stability in Somalia.

We believe that, ultimately, the Somali people control their own political destiny and must choose to lay down their arms and end the interminable cycle of violence that has engulfed Somalia since 1991. Nonetheless, we also recognize that the international community and we must do our part. The international community has once again turned its attention to Somalia and is ready to demonstrate its commitment to assist in political reconciliation and economic development. It is now up to the Somali people to turn away from "warlordism" for their "States" which seek to play a constructive role, to demonstrate their willingness to put the failures of the past behind them and to work together for a new Somalia.

Mr. Granovsky (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We join other speakers in thanking the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Somalia, Mr. Yusuf Hassan Ibrahim, for his important statement containing a very thorough and detailed analysis of the situation in his country. In our opinion, that statement was extremely useful. We also thank you, Mr. President, for having organized this meeting.

The Russian delegation agrees with the assessments and observations contained in the Secretary-General's report. We wish to comment on three key issues reflected in the report.

We share the Secretary-General's "cautious optimism" with regard to the outcome of the ninth Summit of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). The general understanding achieved on how to resolve the urgent problems of Somalia on the basis of consensus among the countries of the subregion is an important prerequisite for harmonizing the various peace initiatives under way. Coordinated efforts in the framework of IGAD among the Somali factions will deprive the destructive forces of any opportunity to exploit the conflicts between the countries of the subregion and other interested players.

The task of the Security Council and the entire international community is to strengthen the positive approach of IGAD and to encourage Somalis in their turn to interact constructively with that organization. Russia is prepared to continue to assist the efforts of the countries of the subregion on a bilateral basis and within the context of the Joint IGAD Partners Forum.

We note the Secretary-General's intention to establish committees of friends of Somalia in Nairobi and in New York. We believe that such structures should primarily provide moral, political and, where possible, material support for the collective efforts of the IGAD countries and the positive forces in Somalia to emerge from crisis. Naturally, membership in the committees of friends should be open to all interested participants, including members of the Security Council, that can provide genuine assistance in that work.

We agree with the Secretary-General's conclusion that the security situation in Somalia, including in Mogadishu, is not yet conducive to the establishment of a United Nations political office there. The Council, together with other members of the United Nations family, must map out a clear path for providing effective assistance to the Somali people once the conditions have been met.

We have also focused our attention on that section of the report addressing the fight against international terrorism. We note that the leaders of the Transitional National Government have asserted that they will not tolerate any manifestation of such a threat in the territory of Somalia. At the same time, we understand that the capacities of the Transitional National Government and other Somali groupings prepared to combat extremism are limited. It is the task of the international community and the Security Council, at the heart of the struggle against international terrorism, to provide the Somalis with the essential help they need to neutralize any possible manifestation of terrorism. It is important for the Somalis themselves energetically to cooperate in that task with the Counter-Terrorism Committee established pursuant to a Security Council resolution. Such cooperation, including possible measures against persons linked to international terrorism, should have a solid foundation in international law. The ultimate neutralization of the various threats emanating from the territory of Somalia will be impossible without the restoration of peace and order throughout the country.

Mr. Harrison (United Kingdom): May I, through you, Sir, thank the Foreign Minister of the Transitional National Government of Somalia for his statement this morning.

The representative of Spain will be speaking shortly on behalf of the European Union and my delegation naturally endorses everything that he will say. I just want to make a few points in my national capacity.

The Nairobi peace and reconciliation conference will be crucial, but we should all be realistic about what it can achieve. Even if the parties are able to resolve only some of their differences, we would reckon that the Nairobi peace conference will have been a success. We must, however, regard it as the first stage in a process and not the endgame and be realistic in assuming that agreement at Nairobi is unlikely on a broad-based Government. Instead, the focus of Nairobi should be on resolving differences among the parties in the South and on finding a political settlement that may result in the formation of a broad-based Government in due course. The United Kingdom is contributing £25,000 to the expenses of the Nairobi conference.

It is important that the United Nations and, indeed, other international bodies do not make any statements before Nairobi that might prejudice the outcome — for example, statements that push a particular constitutional model for Somalia. As many delegations have already said, the only stable outcome will be one that is generated and agreed by the Somali people and parties themselves.

A number of delegations have commented on the question of a peace-building mission in Somalia. We believe that a United Nations office there would be useful, but we also believe that it is important that we all respect the Secretary-General's judgement on the safety of personnel, which is clearly the most important priority.

We are also concerned by the proliferation of arms supplies to Somalia. Countries that are engaged in the arms trade to Somalia are not only in breach of Council resolution 733 (1992) but are also further destabilizing the country, fuelling the gun culture and undermining regional efforts to reduce the flow of arms. Like others, we are in favour of reactivating the arms embargo.

We also encourage the United Nations, in conjunction with the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and other regional bodies, to do more to solve problems that would bring practical benefits for the people of Somalia. In this context, it may be worth encouraging the Government of Saudi Arabia more energetically to lift the livestock ban, to make a serious attempt to stop the flow of illegal arms and to take tough action against the dumping of toxic waste into legal fishing areas in Somali waters.

Finally, if the Nairobi Conference fails and hostilities increase, the international community will need to consider appropriate action against those who are responsible.

Mr. Aguilar Zínser (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): I join the expressions of congratulations to you, Mr. President, on your convening of this meeting on Somalia. On behalf of my country, I should also like to thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Somalia, Mr. Yusuf Hassan Ibrahim, for presenting his statement to the Council in a frank and precise manner.

At this meeting, we return once again to the issue of Somalia, which has been a source of concern to the United Nations and the Security Council for more than 10 years. During this period, the initiatives presented have not taken hold or achieved their fundamental purpose: peace, development, harmony and understanding in the country. However, this must not be a reason for the Security Council and the United Nations to excuse themselves from their responsibilities and commitments in Somalia.

The evaluation undertaken by the inter-agency security assessment mission that went to Somalia is not promising. Quite simply, the analysis of the conflict situation that the country is living through underlines the necessity that this issue remain a matter for the Council's attention.

Last week, in the private consultations held by the Council, Assistant Secretary-General Ibrahim Fall reiterated the feeling of the Secretary-General, expressed in his letter of November 2001, that so long as security conditions do not permit the return of the United Nations Political Office for Somalia, it will have to continue performing its functions from Nairobi. Thus, Mr. Winston Tubman, recently appointed by the Secretary-General as his Representative to direct that Office, will have to begin its work from another country. I should like to add here that we wish Mr. Tubman every success in the difficult task for which the Secretary-General has singled him out. We also give him our vote of confidence.

Upon arriving in the region, Mr. Tubman will confront a very complicated situation in which, in Mexico's view, what is most urgent is to concentrate efforts on humanitarian assistance, supplying ample aid to the Somali population, who need it for distinct reasons. This population faces, in addition to inter-ethnic problems and the armed conflict between opposing groups, grave conditions of malnutrition and endemic diseases that require medical attention. Above all, an economic recovery that would enable improvement in the welfare of the Somali population is needed.

Our attention must be immediate and, of course, include the assessment of how various United Nations programmes in Somalia can be reinforced, how we can establish a fund to support the process of peace that may be achieved in that country, and how to coordinate peacemaking and humanitarian efforts. There is a close link between security conditions in the country and food security for the Somalis, and this is a priority that the United Nations must address.

The context in which humanitarian and development activities must be undertaken is precisely that of improving security. We must confront the prevailing conditions of insecurity that caused the withdrawal of United Nations personnel and that today put at risk the safety and security of locally hired

personnel in the areas where the United Nations carries out its sorely needed and urgent tasks.

Closely connected to the problem of security is that of worsening humanitarian and food security conditions and, in its turn, the trafficking in and proliferation of small arms and light weapons. We recall that there is a United Nations sanctions regime imposed by the Security Council that includes an embargo on small arms and light weapons. Nevertheless, the conflict continues and the sanctions regime has been unable to operate effectively. Therefore, we welcome and firmly support the Bulgarian delegation in its efforts to restructure that regime.

We also note once again the Secretariat's affirmation that this is one of the most dangerous environments in which the United Nations operates, and thus we welcome all the efforts that the Organization can undertake to control arms and the financing of arms trafficking and to deal with the possible links between these and terrorist groups as one of the central tasks of the Organization.

We support the Transitional National Government and believe, as said earlier today, that it is the starting point for achieving peace and reconciliation in Somalia. We wish the Government every success in its efforts to bring about peace in the country and to establish the basis for reconciliation and conditions of governance that would include the participation of all groups and factions in the country.

We are aware that, as pointed out by the Secretary-General in his report, the security situation in Somalia is highly fragile and that the Transitional National Government does not enjoy full recognition throughout the territory. Therefore, we hope that the reconciliation efforts carried out by the Government and promoted by the international community will be successful and that they benefit all domestic groups.

We believe that the Security Council, the international community and international agencies as a whole must coordinate their efforts to see to it that the parties give up violence and achieve a national reconciliation in which the various actors and groups accept the need to share power. We will therefore pay close attention to developments related to, and the results that will emanate from, the upcoming National Reconciliation Conference set for April, which is to be convened under the auspices of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). We also invite all Somali groups to participate in that meeting in a constructive spirit.

We trust that at that Conference solutions will be found that are based on the principle of respect for the national sovereignty and territorial integrity of Somalia and that will create conditions conducive to governance and to the sharing of authority and power in the country.

We support the decision taken at the IGAD Summit recognizing that consensus among Somalia's neighbours is essential for progress to be made in the quest for a peaceful settlement and an orderly transition. This is an opportunity for the countries involved to demonstrate their commitment to peace and stability in the region while respecting the will of the Somali people themselves.

In this sense, we endorse the support voiced here for the initiative to create two groups of friends of Somalia — within the region itself and here in New York, at United Nations Headquarters.

In conclusion, I should like to place on record the fact that Mexico has all along maintained that the United Nations must play an active and direct role in efforts to keep the peace in Somalia. Though we agree with the Secretary-General's assertion that peace cannot be imposed on the parties to a given conflict if they do not seek it actively and do not in fact want it, we maintain that, wherever a process is required for achieving peace, it is the duty of the United Nations to guarantee that this is done and that, wherever obstacles are encountered to progress in this respect, it is our duty, as members of the Security Council, to work tirelessly to help ensure that such obstacles are overcome.

The President: In view of the late hour, and with the concurrence of the members of the Council, I shall now suspend the meeting until 3.30 p.m.

The meeting was suspended at 1.15 p.m.